

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently amended) A method for circuit modification of a microelectronic chip comprising at least one conductor in an organic dielectric, said method comprising:

applying a protective inorganic surface layer on said organic dielectric;

forming ~~at least one~~ a window in said protective inorganic surface layer to selectively expose an underlying portion of said organic dielectric, said window located over an area that covers a conductor to be modified by an ion-milling process;

etching said organic dielectric ~~in an area of~~ through said ~~at least one~~ window to selectively remove a portion of said organic dielectric adjacent to said ~~at least one~~ conductor; and

performing ~~at least one~~ an ion-milling process ~~that modifies said at least one~~ on said conductor.

2. (Currently amended) The method in claim 1, wherein said ~~modification~~ ion-milling process done to said ~~at least one~~ conductor comprises at least one of:

milling said conductor with a focused ion beam;

milling said conductor with a focused ion beam in the presence of a passivating gas; and

depositing additional conductor material using an ion-assisted deposition.

3. (Original) The method in claim 1, wherein said etching of said organic dielectric comprises a reactive ion etching.

4. (Currently amended) The method in claim 1, wherein said ~~at least one~~ conductor comprises metal.
5. (Original) The method in claim 4, wherein said metal comprises copper.
6. (Original) The method in claim 1, wherein said protective inorganic surface layer includes an inorganic layer which etches selectively to the organic dielectric.
7. (Currently amended) The method in claim 6, wherein said inorganic layer which etches selectively to the organic dielectric comprises nitride.
8. (Original) The method in claim 1, wherein said window is formed by a focused ion beam.
9. (Original) The method in claim 1, wherein said window is formed by a mask/resist process.
10. (Original) The method in claim 3, wherein said reactive ion etching uses one of oxygen and an oxygen compound.
11. (Currently amended) The method in claim 2, wherein said passivation gas comprises xenon ~~difluoride~~ difluoride.
12. (Currently amended) A method of ~~selectively removing organic dielectric adjacent to a conductor~~ preparing an electronic chip for a modification process on a conductor thereon, said method comprising:

depositing a protective inorganic surface layer onto ~~said an~~ organic dielectric material
embedding a conductor that is to be modified by an ion-milling process;

forming ~~at least one~~ a window in said protective inorganic surface layer to selectively
expose an underlying portion of said organic dielectric material; and

etching said organic dielectric ~~in an area of~~ material through said ~~at least one~~ window
to selectively remove a portion of said organic dielectric material adjacent to said conductor.

13. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein said etching comprises a reactive ion etching.

14. (Currently amended) A method of manufacturing an electronic device having at least one
layer of organic dielectric, said electronic device having at least one conductor in an organic
dielectric to be modified by an ion-milling process during said manufacturing, said method
comprising:

depositing a protective inorganic surface layer onto said at least one layer of
organic dielectric;

forming at least one window in said protective inorganic surface layer to
selectively expose an underlying portion of said organic dielectric; and

etching said organic dielectric in an area of said at least one window to selectively
remove said organic dielectric adjacent to a conductor to be modified by an ion-milling
process.

15. (Original) The method of claim 14, wherein said etching comprises a reactive ion etching.

16. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said at least one conductor to be

modified and said organic ~~layer~~ dielectric to be selectively removed are buried below at least one upper layer and said method further comprises successively providing an opening in each of said at least one upper layer.

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